



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

TODD P. GRAVES

Contact Don Ledford, Public Affairs • (816) 426-4220 • 400 East Ninth Street, Room 5510 • Kansas City, MO 64106

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NOVEMBER 10, 2005
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OPERATION ICE STORM
**JOPLIN MAN FIRST SENTENCED FOR ROLE
IN MULTI-KILO METH CONSPIRACY**

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Joplin, Mo., man was sentenced in federal court today for his role in a conspiracy to distribute between five and 15 kilograms of methamphetamine. Today's sentencing, Graves said, is a result of Operation Ice Storm, a long-term investigation into the illegal distribution of large quantities of methamphetamine in southwest Missouri.

Ronald D. Preston, 34, of Joplin, was sentenced by U.S. Magistrate Judge James C. England this afternoon to 15 years and eight months in federal prison without parole.

On April 13, 2005, **Preston** pleaded guilty to his role in a conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine. By pleading guilty, **Preston** admitted that he conspired with others to distribute between five and 15 kilograms of methamphetamine between August 2002 and Sept. 20, 2004, in Jasper County, Mo.

Preston is one of three co-defendants to plead guilty in this case. The co-defendants were originally charged in an indictment returned by a federal grand jury on Oct. 14, 2004, in Springfield, Mo.

On April 18, 2005, **Jacquelyn M. Witt**, 21, of Carthage, Mo., pleaded guilty to conspiring with others to distribute between five and 15 kilograms of methamphetamine between August 2002 and Sept. 20, 2004, in Jasper County.

On July 8, 2005, **Amy C. Lawrence**, 21, of Joplin, pleaded guilty to conspiring with others to distribute between five and 15 kilograms of methamphetamine between August 2002 and Sept. 20, 2004, in Jasper County.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Robyn L. McKee. The case was investigated by the Jasper County Drug Task Force, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Joplin, Mo., Police Department, the Carthage, Mo., Police Department, the Jasper County, Mo., Sheriff's Department, the Jasper County, Mo., Metropolitan Police Department, the Carterville, Mo., Police Department, the Newton County, Mo., Sheriff's Department, the Missouri State Highway Patrol, the Central Oklahoma Metro Interdiction Team and the Texas Department of Public Safety.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at
www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow